



United States Department of the Interior

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Mountain-Prairie Region



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REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S ORDER NO. 12

Subject: Confined Spaces

Sec. 1. What is the purpose of this Order? Within Region 6, to provide guidance and outline the requirements for confined spaces, and the responsibilities for protecting employees from the following when entering confined spaces while doing job tasks:

- A. Exposure to hazardous atmospheres,
- B. Engulfment in materials, or
- C. Other conditions with the potential to trap or suffocate a person.

Because of the complexities and risk associated with Permit Required Confined Spaces (PRCS), this policy **prohibits entry into Permit Required Confined Spaces**, described later in this Order. **All PRCS work will be contracted out to a qualified contractor** who will meet the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.146, Permit Required Confined Spaces.

Sec. 2. To whom does this Order apply? Region 6 Project Leaders and supervisors are responsible for implementation of this Order. This order applies to Service employees (including seasonal employees), volunteers, Job Corps and Youth Conservation Corps members, student interns, and contractors when they are entering confined spaces on Service-owned or -leased property or as part of their assigned duties.

Sec. 3. What are the authorities for taking this action?

- A. Federal Agency Safety Programs and Responsibilities (Public Law 91-596, Sec 19)
- B. Permit Required Confined Spaces (29 CFR 1910.146)
- C. Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters (29 CFR 1960)
- D. Executive Order 12196, Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees
- E. 242 FW Industrial Hygiene, Chapter 11, Confined Spaces

Sec. 4. How was this Order developed? The Region 6 Regional Safety and Health Council voted to supplement 242 FW 11, Confined Spaces, during its March 2008 meeting. Not allowing employee entry into PRCS will enhance the overall safety program, eliminate the high risks and complexities, and reduce the costs associated with PRCS entry.

Sec 5. What is a confined space, and which confined spaces require permits?

A. A confined space is:

- 1) An enclosed space that is large enough and shaped so that a person could enter and perform job tasks,
- 2) A space with limited or restricted ways to enter or exit (e.g., manholes, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, and sewage lift stations), and
- 3) Not designed for continuous occupancy.

B. A Permit Required Confined Space is a confined space (as defined in 5.A, above) that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- 1) Contains or has a potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere,
- 2) Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing an entrant,
- 3) Is configured in such a way that an entrant could be trapped or asphyxiated by walls or wall coverings, or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section,
- 4) Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard, or
- 5) The space is a part of a sewer system that can be entered. Any entry into any part of a sewer system that meets the requirements of a confined space requires a permit.

C. Confined Spaces such as manholes, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, and sewage lift stations are examples of confined spaces; many of them will require a permit to enter.

Sec 6. Who can enter Confined Spaces that are not Permit Required? Only Service employees (including seasonal employees) will be authorized to enter confined spaces. Volunteers, Job Corps and Youth Conservation Corps members, and student interns are prohibited from entering confined spaces. Note that **entry into PRCS is prohibited for all employees, at all times, and will always be contracted out.**

Sec 7. Who is responsible for the confined spaces program?

A. The Regional Director must provide sufficient support and resources to effectively implement the confined spaces program.

B. The Chief, R6 Division of Safety and Occupational Health will:

- 1) Interpret the confined spaces program requirements and serve as an advisor to resolve questions and issues within Region 6.
- 2) Help Project Leaders and supervisors develop their confined spaces programs when asked.
- 3) Evaluate implementation of the confined spaces program during field station safety program evaluations.

C. Project Leaders/supervisors are responsible for the following practical and recordkeeping requirements associated with confined spaces:

- 1) Conduct a workplace evaluation of work areas at their stations to identify confined spaces and determine if there are any confined spaces that require permits. All confined spaces, both permitted and non-permitted, must be on an inventory, and the inventory must identify them as either permit required or non-permit required. Project Leaders must maintain and update copies of the Confined Space Inventory (see Exhibit 1 for Sample Inventory Format).
- 2) **What is a workplace evaluation?** A workplace evaluation is when a Project Leader/supervisor determines if a space meets the definition of a confined space, and if the hazards in the space require a permit for entry (see Exhibit 2 for Guidelines for Determining Confined Spaces). If the Project Leader/supervisor decides a workplace contains Permit Required Confined Spaces, he/she must:
 - a. Remind all employees that **entry into a PRCS is prohibited in all cases.**
 - b. **Notify** everyone who will work around the confined space that it requires a permit for entry; **and** therefore, any work in the space will be contracted out. Also, brief employees on the specific hazards identified in the space that makes it a PRCS.
 - c. Ensure that signs are posted at PRCSs saying that a permit is required for entry and entry must be authorized. Mark each PRCS with a sign stating **“DANGER-- PERMIT REQUIRED CONFINED SPACE--DO NOT ENTER UNLESS AUTHORIZED”**, or other similar language.
 - d. Secure all openings to PRCSs to prevent the entry of unauthorized people.
 - e. Annually review the Confined Space Program and Inventory. Any new hazard(s) identified in PRCSs, through the review of contractor PRCS Permits and/or the discussions with the contractor, will be identified on the updated inventory.

New hazards identified in non-permitted spaces will also be identified on the inventory, and, if necessary, the spaces will be reclassified as PRCS.
- 3) What are Project Leaders/supervisors responsible to do when they contract for **PRCS** entry?

- a. Provide contractors who will enter PRCS a copy of the completed Confined Space Inventory for the station that includes the known hazards of the space that will be entered, the station's experience with the space, and why the space was determined to be a PRCS by the Project Leader/supervisor, as well as copies of any past permits issued for entry into the space.
- b. Inform the contractor that entry into the PRCS is allowed only through compliance with a written permit space program meeting the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.146, and the contractor's completed entry permit for the space.
- c. As part of the contract, the Project Leader will request a copy of the Contractor's PRCS plan, and any associated Safety and Health plans, that the contractor plans to use to enter the space prior to any entry activities. The PRCS plan or associated Safety and Health plans that the contractor will use to enter the PRCS must contain specific emergency procedures for the planned entry.
- d. Apprise the contractor of any precautions or procedures that the station has implemented for the protection of Service personnel or visitors near permit spaces where contractor personnel will be working.
- e. As part of the contract, the Project Leader will request copies of any PRCS Entry Permits the contractor used after the entry is complete.
- f. Debrief the contractor at the conclusion of the entry operations regarding the permit space program followed, and regarding any hazards confronted or created in the permit space(s) during entry operations.

Sec. 8. Who can I call for help?

- Regional Safety Office - Safety and Occupational Health Specialist, Environmental Compliance Coordinator
- FWS Safety Office

Sec. 9. When is this Order effective? This order is effective immediately. This order does not expire, unless amended, superseded or rescinded.

Attachments

REGION 6 -- CONFINED SPACE INVENTORY
(EXAMPLE: Confined Space Inventory Sheet)

Important: See next page for determining if this space is a Permit Required Confined Space

Facility Name:	
Confined Space Number:	
Is this a Permit Required Confined Space?:	
Location on Facility:	
Description of Space:	
Dimensions of Space:	
Possible Atmospheric Hazard:	
Possible Physical Hazard:	
Known Unusual Hazards:	
Number of Entry Points:	
Comments: (experience with entry into space)	
Surveyed By:	
Date Added:	

INSERT or ATTACH PICTURE(S) of SPACE HERE

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Guidelines for Determining Confined Spaces

The following criteria must be used to determine if the space listed previously is a confined space:

- _____ The space is enclosed;
- _____ The space is large enough and is shaped so that an employee can enter and perform job tasks;
- _____ The space has limited or restricted means ways to enter or exit (for example, manholes, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, wells, and diked areas); and
- _____ The space is not designed for continuous occupancy.

If all 4 blanks are checked, the space is a confined space.

The following criteria must be used to determine if a confined space is a Permit Required Confined Space:

- _____ The space contains a hazardous atmosphere or a known *potential* to contain a hazardous atmosphere.
- _____ The space contains a material with the potential for engulfing an entrant (for example, grain, ore, sand, liquid, etc.).
- _____ The space is configured so that an entrant could be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls, or a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section.
- _____ The space has some other recognized serious safety or health hazard.
- _____ The space is a part of a sewer system (any entry into any part of a sewer system requires a permit).

If any of the 5 blanks are checked, the space is a Permit Required Confined Space (PRCS) and, in accordance with Regional Director's Order #12, any entry into the space for any reason must be done by a qualified contractor.

Note: This inventory must be completed by the Project Leader and maintained as part of the recordkeeping requirements for Confined Spaces.